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INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
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RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 3954
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 1771
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 1638
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL PRIORITY 2207
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0807
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE PRIORITY 2637
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
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RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY

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SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN, DRL

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: BROTHER CONFIRMS ARREST OF FORMER
DISSIDENT GULGELDY ANNANIYAZOV

11. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

12. (SBU) PolOff spoke on June 27 with Charygeldy Annaniyazov, the brother of Gulgeldy Annaniyazov, a former political activist who left the country in 2002 after serving almost five years in prison in Turkmenistan. Charygeldy confirmed press reports that Gulgeldy had been arrested at his parents' home on June 24. He said that he did not know how Gulgeldy had gotten into the country, given his inability to obtain a Turkmen visa, but surmised that he came into the country from Kazakhstan. He said the family was in the process of finding a lawyer to represent him, because they had been told that Gulgeldy would be prosecuted in one of Ashgabat's city courts soon. He said they were only aware of one charge against Gulgeldy, and that was illegal entry into the country.

13. (SBU) Gulgeldy Annaniyazov was one of the political activists called the "Ashgabat Eight," who were the remaining activists of the 27 people imprisoned for organizing a demonstration advocating democratic reform in 1995. He spent almost five years in prison, then was freed in a 1999 prison amnesty. He fled the country shortly thereafter, albeit illegally, and was caught up in extradition proceedings in Kazakhstan that eventually led to him receiving refugee status and resettling in Norway in 2002. In May, opposition press reported that he was making plans to return to Turkmenistan, because he had been encouraged by the daily news of progress on human rights and socio-economic reforms. Charygeldy Annaniyazov did not know how authorities had known that his elder brother had returned to Turkmenistan, and would be found at his parents' home. It might be that authorities were aware of the opposition website reports that indicated Annaniyazov's intention to return, and simply monitored the family home for indications of his return.

14. (SBU) COMMENT: Although the facts of this case are still unclear, the unanswered question is why Annaniyazov chose to return to Turkmenistan and why he likely entered illegally. With the majority of his family still here, they may have been the strongest lure. However, it is also possible to consider that he may have come to Turkmenistan to

test the parameters of the government's human rights reform. Whatever the reason, Annaniyazov's case -- involving an individual of human rights concern who nonetheless did break Turkmenistan's immigration law to enter the country -- blurs the line between a case of pure political harassment and legal wrongdoing. It will be worth following how the authorities respond to the case. END COMMENT.
HOAGLAND